

Latino and Puerto Rican Affairs Commission
Connecticut General Assembly

Legislative Policy Agenda

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Executive Summary

Demographics reveal that the Latino population in Connecticut is both young and dramatically growing in size. Unfortunately, data also reveals that the population has too many low-income households and workers with high rates of unemployment, as well as too many teenagers who drop out of high school. Other troubling statistics show that many Latino families live in racially segregated and socially isolated areas throughout the state where they are not afforded the opportunity for a quality education. Nevertheless, there is now a once in a generation opportunity for Latinos in Connecticut to enter the middle-class and improve their socio-economic standing in large numbers as the state's Baby Boomer workforce is aging rapidly and entering into retirement; thus creating job openings for many of the state's Latinos to fill. Our Commission's 2016 policy agenda will break down barriers and create avenues for all Latinos in Connecticut to become fully integrated *Nutmeggers*. Latinos must become a significant portion of the state's middle class for Connecticut to have a prosperous economy and to maintain the state's high quality of life.

All Latinos in Connecticut will be **healthy** when the prevalence of obesity among Latino children is reduced putting them on a path to good health and an improved quality of life. Latinos suffer high rates of diabetes and tackling childhood diabetes early will help to both improve these children's life-long health and reduce the high medical costs associated with diabetes. More Latino children are now living in the state's rural areas where fluoridated public water is not available. This increases the possibility that Latino children in rural areas will suffer from poor oral health. More of the state's resident population is either Spanish- or Portuguese-dominant so we must have comprehensive demographic reporting of healthcare data to ensure that they are not being misdiagnosed because of language barriers. The number of teenage Latinas getting pregnant will be reduced so they can focus on their futures unhindered by family responsibilities best dealt with once they have good income and a steady job.

All Latinos in Connecticut will be **safe** when they have greater access to affordable housing throughout the state and not just in areas with both disproportionately high rates of crime and poverty. Recommendations from the Governor's Task Force on Emergency Communications must be implemented to ensure that Spanish- and Portuguese-dominant populations are well informed during emergencies.

2016 Legislative Agenda

Health

C.G.S. § 2-120(c)(1)(A) states, "that all members of the Latino and Puerto Rican population of the state are healthy."

- Reduce Pregnancies to Latino Teenagers Age 17 or Younger
- Reduce Obesity among Latino Children
- Fluoridate Public Water Supply and Study Fluoridation of Rural School Water
- Include Race/Ethnicity and Primary Language in All Healthcare Reporting

Safety

C.G.S. § 2-120(c) (1)(B) states, "that all members of the Latino and Puerto Rican population are **safe**."

- Reduce the Close Proximity of Prisoner Halfway Houses to Latino Children
- Recommendations from the Governor's Task Force on Emergency Communications

Educational Success

C.G.S. § 2-120(c) (1)(C) states, "that all members of the Latino and Puerto Rican population of the state **achieve educational success**."

- State Government Must Fully Fund State-Mandated Programs for Municipalities
- Stop State Overfunding of Some Town Education Budgets
- Require Fiscal Accountability and Transparency of Municipal Education Spending
- State and Local Monies Budgeted for Education Must be Spent on Education
- Create a K-12 Dual-Language English-Spanish Magnet Program in Hartford
- More Minority Teachers: Para Educator Certification for High School Students
- Increase Availability of Low- and Moderate-Income Housing in High Performing School Districts
- Improve Education Outcomes for English Language Learners (ELLs)
- Promote STEM Courses among Latino Students in Middle School and High Schools

All Latinos in Connecticut will **achieve educational success** when Latino families have more opportunities to live in high performing school districts. Every dollar of K-12 education spending must be scrutinized to ensure monies are spent on improving tangible outcomes. Furthermore, all state and local monies budgeted for education must be spent on education and not diverted to unapproved purposes. Some school districts receive more state education funding than they should, while most receive less. Every school district in Connecticut should receive the state education funds they are entitled to – *not more, not less*. Changes will occur in the classroom as bilingual education is improved and expanded to all students in Connecticut so that all students graduating from high school will be fluent in English and Spanish. Latino children will achieve high educational outcomes with a solid foundation to pursue well-paid careers in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math). Latino children in K-12 will see more Latino teachers in their classrooms, which will increase their self-confidence and foster a sense of their belonging in Connecticut. The state must fully fund *all* mandated programs. Otherwise, locally funded programs may be cut because of insufficient funding since local revenues had to be spent on state-mandated programs.

All Latinos in Connecticut will be **economically self-sufficient** as more well-paid infrastructure jobs are created. Latinos in high school will obtain a solid footing for career success when there are both more year-round internships and summer jobs for low-income youth. Completion of the Willimantic Whitewater Park will create jobs for many unemployed Latinos living in eastern Connecticut. There will be lower prison recidivism among Latino ex-offenders when they have more job interviews. As Latinos become a larger proportion of the state’s workforce, the growing demand for goods and services wanted by Latinos will help grow the state’s economy.

All Latinos in Connecticut will be **free from discrimination** when local, regional, and state boards and commissions reflect the demographics of their constituents. Ending prison gerrymandering and adopting non-partisan legislative redistricting will contribute to Connecticut’s Latinos being fairly represented in the state’s legislature and Congress. Pre-trial release will replace for-profit bail bonds that keep low-risk Latinos in jail instead of working to support themselves and their families. The hyper segregation of Latinos in the state’s urban areas will be remediated when exclusionary zoning laws are eliminated and more low-cost housing is available throughout the state.

Obtaining these outcomes is the most important objective of the Latino and Puerto Rican Affairs Commission. The focus on these specific issues is a direct outcome of feedback from commissioners who took into account a myriad of considerations at their annual retreat held in September 2015. This is a living document and these priorities will likely change for future legislative sessions as new considerations arise.

Economic Self-Sufficiency

C.G.S. § 2-120(c)(1)(D) states, “that all members of the Latino and Puerto Rican population of the state are economically self-sufficient.”

- Obtain State Funding to Complete the Willimantic Whitewater Park
- Increase State Funding for Transportation Infrastructure
- Ban the Box: Fair Chance Hiring
- Increase Number of Paid Internships and Summer Jobs for Low-Income Youth
- Increase Economic Growth by Increasing Racial Diversity in the Workplace

Free from Discrimination

C.G.S. § 2-120(c) (1)(E) states, “that all members of the Latino and Puerto Rican population of the state are free from discrimination.”

- Replace For-Profit Bail Bonds with Lower Cost Pre-Trial Release
- Create Task Force to Study Non-Partisan Methods for Legislative Redistricting
- End Prison Gerrymandering
- Reduce Housing Segregation among Latinos
- Increase Number of Latinos on Public Sector Boards and Commissions

Health

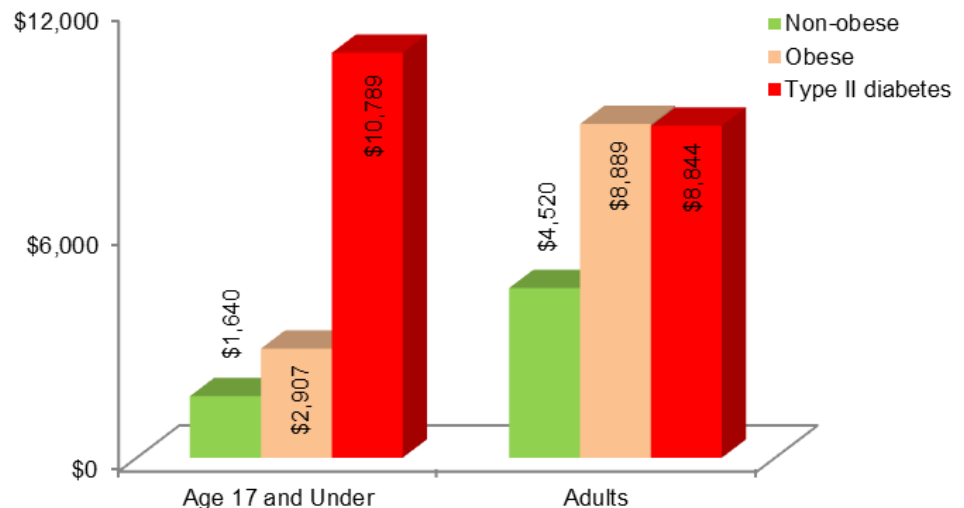
Reduce Obesity Among Latino Children

The issue:

Concerns over childhood obesity in Connecticut led the General Assembly in 2013 to pass Public Act 13-173 creating the Task Force on Childhood Obesity, which delivered its findings on September 18th, 2014.¹

Among the many negative consequences of obesity, a primary concern is that: “Obesity is considered the principal precursor to type II diabetes in adolescents.”² Furthermore, 70 percent of overweight adolescents will become overweight adults.³ There is added economic cost associated with obesity, as a child with type II diabetes will incur nearly \$9,150 annually in additional healthcare costs.⁴ Healthcare costs for obese adults are nearly double that for non-obese adults.

Annual Claims Based on Obesity Diagnosis



In Connecticut in 2003, diabetes cost **\$1.7 billion** in direct and indirect costs.⁵ Hispanic children (grades 9-12) have the 2nd highest rate of obesity among racial/ethnic groups and they will account for 25 percent of children in Connecticut by 2020.⁶

In 2014 in Connecticut, 25 percent of the population was obese (BMI \geq 30.0).⁷ Furthermore, lower income individuals were more likely to be obese than higher income individuals, and roughly one-fourth of the white population and one-third of Blacks and Hispanics were obese.

Legislative recommendations:

- Require more physical activity at all grade levels both during the school day and in after-school programs.
- Restrict marketing and access to unhealthy foods in schools.
- Institute the surveillance of body mass Index (BMI) in schools.
- Make pre-diabetes screening programs available to all at-risk children.

Furthermore, LPRAC will support other policy goals to both reduce the occurrence of obesity among Latino youth and improve the health of Latino youth.

Fluoridate Public Water Supply and Study Fluoridation of Rural School Water

The issue:

“Children with poorer oral health status were more likely to ... miss school, and perform poorly in school.”⁸ **American Journal of Public Health**

This has tangible consequences for Hispanic children in Connecticut, who have one of the largest K-12 education gaps in the U.S. between Hispanics and whites. Fortunately, Hispanic children in Connecticut are the most likely to receive preventative oral care through the state’s HUSKY Program.⁹ Fluoridation is also a cost effective public investment as every dollar spent on fluoridation **saves \$38** in dental bills.¹⁰

“Pew’s initiative for children’s dental policy promotes community water fluoridation as one of the most effective and least expensive strategies for improving oral health.”¹¹ **The Pew Charitable Trusts**

Furthermore, an increasing population of Hispanics is living in the state’s rural areas where there may not be a public water supply. The state’s current system for providing fluoride to children in these rural areas is cumbersome; consequently, it could be that many children in these rural areas are not getting the necessary minimum level of fluoride to reduce tooth decay. During two days in 2014, more than 100 patients travelled from the rural counties of Litchfield and Windham to receive free dental care in Hartford.¹²

The Connecticut Dept. of Public Health should investigate adding fluoride to **drinking water in rural schools** as has been done in rural areas of Kentucky since 1975.¹³ This would ensure that all children, regardless of where they live, are getting the appropriate level of fluoride needed to reduce tooth decay.

Legislative recommendations:

- Oppose legislation that eliminates fluoridation of public water supplies.
- Support adoption of a new optimal level for water fluoridation as recommended by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services at 0.7 milligrams of fluoride per liter of water.
- Support legislation to study the fluoridation of school water in rural areas that lack a public water supply.

Furthermore, LPRAC will support other policy goals to increase dental health among Hispanic children in Connecticut.

MORE THAN

72%

of Americans have access to fluoridated water

and

IT COSTS ABOUT

50 CENTS

per person per year to add fluoride in larger cities

and

**FLUORIDATION
REDUCES TOOTH
DECAY**

20-40%

Sources: American Dental Association,
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Include Race/Ethnicity and Primary Language in All Healthcare Reporting

The issue:

In some instances, healthcare reporting includes comprehensive information on the demographics of healthcare recipients such as with oral health utilization for the HUSKY Program. This program reports disaggregated data by numerous characteristics including race/ethnicity and primary language.¹⁴

However, healthcare reporting in Connecticut does not always provide comprehensive demographic information. For example, [C.G.S. § 19a-127n](#) requires the Connecticut Department of Public Health to provide annual *Adverse Event Reporting* to the legislature; however, this report does not include information on the race/ethnicity and primary language of patients.¹⁵ It is currently not possible to determine via this report if a specific adverse event (such as a death or disability) was more prevalent among a minority group or possibly linked to a lack of patient understanding because of a language barrier.

The U.S. Dept. of Health and Human services reports:

“The current capacity to identify medical errors in LEP [Limited English Proficiency] patients is severely limited by the lack of systematic collection of race, ethnicity, and language preference (REL) and English proficiency data across the country. Such data collection and reporting is absolutely necessary.”¹⁶

Reporting information on race/ethnicity and the primary language of non-English speaking patients will **alert healthcare professionals** to adverse healthcare outcomes that may be due to cultural differences or language barriers. Healthcare providers in Connecticut should be concerned because more than 275,000 state residents spoke English “less than very well” in 2014.¹⁷

Legislative recommendations:

- Require the annual *Adverse Event Report* to include information disaggregated by race/ethnicity and primary language.
- Require all healthcare data collection and reporting to include comprehensive patient demographics including information on race/ethnicity and primary language.

Furthermore, LPRAC will support other policy goals to reduce the potential for non-English speakers to have avoidable adverse healthcare outcomes because of their limited English-speaking ability.

“The current capacity to identify medical errors in LEP patients is **severely limited** by the lack of systematic collection of race, ethnicity, and language preference (REL) and English proficiency data across the country. This data collection is **absolutely necessary.**”

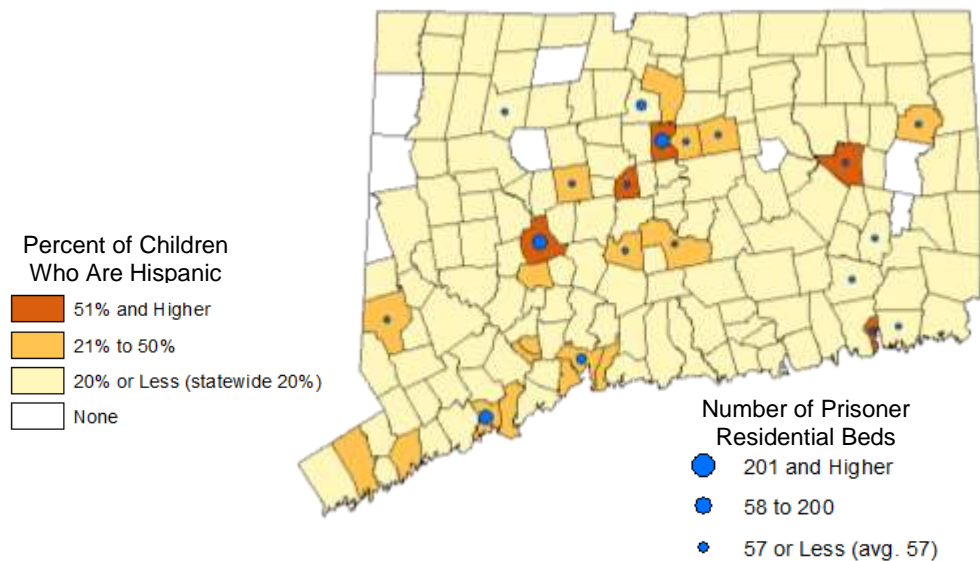
Safety

Reduce the Close Proximity of Prisoner Halfway Houses to Latino Children

The issue:

In Connecticut, **67 percent** of Hispanic children (age 0 to 17) live in a town with at least one prisoner halfway house.¹⁸ It is even more striking that while 110,293 Hispanic children live in these towns; much fewer non-Hispanic white children (75,606) live in towns with a prisoner halfway house.¹⁹ By any measure, Hispanic children are disproportionately exposed to prisoners finishing their prison sentence in a halfway house.

Prisoner Residential Housing near Hispanic Children



It is of grave concern to Latino communities that from 2010 to 2015 more than 1,200 prisoners walked away from their halfway house before being released. More than 160 did not return and may never be found.²⁰ In Bridgeport in 2012, Courtney Burden escaped from a prison halfway house and **murdered** a 22-year-old student who was attending the University of Bridgeport.²¹

“The General Assembly has the authority to pass a public act that would address the halfway house location issue.”

Attorney Hanratty, Legislative Commissioners' Office, email October 1st, 2015

Because these halfway houses are disproportionately located in urban areas where most of the state's Latinos live, the Latino community takes the brunt of the negative fiscal impact these facilities have on municipalities such as loss of tax revenues and the need for more policing.

“Municipal leaders often oppose the siting of offender facilities based on concerns of adverse financial impact on local government budgets including property devaluation, loss of property tax revenue and increased burden of local funding for police, fire and other public services.”²²

Legislative recommendations:

- Halt the addition of new prison halfway house beds and facilities in or near Latino communities.
- Close prison halfway houses in or near Latino communities.

Furthermore, LPRAC will support other policy goals that reduce the high concentration of prison halfway houses in or near Latino communities.

Recommendations from the Governor's Task Force on Emergency Communications

The issue:

Spanish or Portuguese is the primary language for nearly 425,000 Connecticut residents.²³ Nearly 40 percent (166,194) of these residents do not speak English well. The Governor's Task Force on Emergency and Non-Emergency Communications made several recommendations to ensure that the foreign language population of Connecticut is well informed during emergencies such as hurricanes.²⁴ Of particular importance, the task force recommended, among others:

- "...a pilot program of translation services with regard to preparing for an upcoming potential severe storm..."
- "... a strong set of **visual images, graphics**, aids and tools that are used consistently to communicate with the public various kinds of emergency situations..."

Legislative recommendations:

- Require state agencies to utilize a common set of accepted symbols (pictograms) that are multi-language for communicating public safety topics.
- Require all school districts to implement the FEMA STEP (Student Tools for Emergency Planning) program and provide state funding as needed.²⁵
- Obtain funding for LPRAC to implement and manage an emergency communications pilot program in Latino communities.

Furthermore, LPRAC will support other policy goals to improve emergency communication between state government and residents whose primary language is Spanish or Portuguese.

SAFETY/UTILITIES



FIRE



DANGER



POLICE



AMBULANCE



GAS



ELECTRICITY/POWER



BATTERY

WEATHER



SNOW



ICE (SLIPPERY)



RAIN



TORNADO



HEAT



FLOOD



WIND



LIGHTNING

DIRECTIONS



STOP



LEFT



RIGHT



UP



DOWN

Source: New York City Office of Emergency Management. The CT Dept. of Emergency Services and Public Protection (DESPP) plans to release pictograms for Connecticut in early 2016.

Educational Success

State Government Must Fully Fund State-Mandated Programs

The issue:

Every town in Connecticut has Latino residents with Hartford, Waterbury, New Britain, Bridgeport, and New London having some of the largest Latino populations in the state.²⁶ These towns are also the top 5 most **distressed** municipalities in Connecticut with low per capita incomes, low equalized net grand lists, high poverty, high crime rates, etc... Furthermore, distressed municipalities have difficulty providing public services because the demand for services is high yet there are few revenue sources.²⁷

"And we are at a breaking point...we are one more mandate away from having to start laying off people and not delivering the kind of services our residents demand."

Danbury Mayor Mark Boughton, The Hartford Courant, 27may2015

"Towns and cities in Connecticut are responsible for providing the majority of public services in our state: preK-12 education; public safety; roads and other infrastructure; elderly and youth programs; other social services; recreation; and wastewater treatment, among others."²⁸ **Connecticut Conference of Municipalities**

State government often requires municipalities to provide specific services to their local residents but does not fully reimburse local governments.²⁹ Municipalities pay for these mandates by either: (1) reducing funding for other local services such as education and services for the elderly, or (2) increasing revenues from local sources such as the property tax or car tax.

For example in 2014-2015, a total of \$22.5 million in property tax credits were given to over 39,000 households statewide through the state's *Homeowners' – Elderly/Disabled Tax Relief Program*.³⁰ However, the state reimbursed municipalities only \$20.5 million leaving municipalities to absorb the remaining \$2 million lost in local property tax revenue. Because most Latino households in Connecticut are renters (68 percent), this state-mandated property tax credit for homeowners does not benefit many Latino households.³¹ However, Latino communities may suffer, as did Waterbury, which had to offset more than \$71,000 that was not reimbursed by the state for the homeowners' property tax credit.

"...unfunded and underfunded state mandates stifle towns' abilities to deliver much-needed day-to-day services."³² **Connecticut Conference of Municipalities**

State government must provide *mandate relief* by fully funding all state-mandated programs for municipalities; otherwise, municipalities may be forced to cut a broad range of public services to pay for only those services the state requires.³³

Legislative recommendations:

- Require state government to reimburse municipalities for 100 percent of all state-mandated programs.

Furthermore, LPRAC will support other policy goals that maintain or increase funding for municipal services that benefit both Latino children and elderly.

Stop State *Overfunding* of Some Town Education Budgets While *Underfunding* Most Towns

The issue:

Connecticut state government budgeted more than \$2.0 billion annually to towns for K-12 education in fiscal years 2016 and 2017 via the Education Cost Sharing Grant (ECS).³⁴

The amount of ECS funding to towns is supposedly based on a formula that weighs a town's need versus its ability to pay. However, the state does not adhere to the formula as some towns get more funding than the formula requires - while most towns receive less.^{35,36}

In the 2014-2015 fiscal year, fifty towns were overfunded by a total of more than \$21 million.³⁷ It is estimated that an even greater \$25 million in overfunding will go to fifty-five towns in the 2015-2016 fiscal year.³⁸ If this trend continues, the state will have overfunded K-12 education in 93 towns by more than **\$200 million** in the decade from fiscal year 2008-2009 to 2018-2019.³⁹ The overfunding of some towns has the net effect of insufficient funding going to underfunded towns.

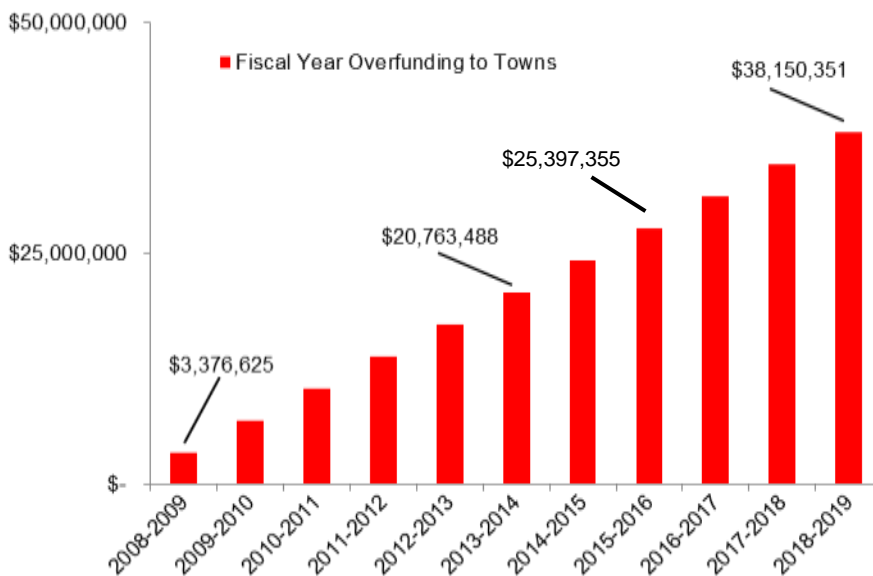
The underlying cause of overfunding is that towns have not had their ECS funding reduced even when enrollments declined and/or the wealth of the town increased.

Legislative recommendations:

- ECS funding to towns that are currently overfunded should be shifted to towns most underfunded based on the ECS formula, using the most currently available data, over a three-year period.
- Some of the overfunding should be reallocated to the state's bilingual education fund, which is grossly underfunded.
- The ECS formula must be updated every year with the most current data available and funding to towns adjusted accordingly. Towns should not be "held harmless."
- Fund an independent study to determine the optimal size of enrollment and staffing for school districts so that education costs are reduced and educational achievement is improved.

Furthermore, LPRAC will support policy goals that ensure equity in both education funding and resources for schools in Latino communities.

K-12 (ECS) Overfunding to Towns



Require Fiscal Accountability and Transparency of Municipal Education Spending

The issue:

On average in 2013, Connecticut spent \$16,663 per pupil on K-12 education, which was the 4th highest per pupil spending among the states.⁴⁰ For K-12 administration (school administration + general administration), Connecticut spent \$1,343 per pupil ranking 3rd highest.⁴¹ Continued funding of K-12 education at this level is problematic given the state's forecast for an accumulated deficit of \$6.5 billion for fiscal years 2016 through 2020.⁴²

At the same time as the state is experiencing budget deficits, fifty-five towns were **overfunded** by a total of **\$25 million** for K-12 education in 2015-2016.⁴³

Furthermore, some municipalities have budget surpluses and others are not spending all the K-12 education funding provided by the state.⁴⁴

**K-12 per Pupil Administrative Spending
2013**



Source: CT State Dept. of Education

“...we are still finding that districts [Alliance Districts] are carrying forward as much as 50% of their current funding into the following year and in certain cases using it to support anticipated funding shortfalls. The most critical impact of this is that important parts of their approved plans to improve local educational opportunities are either not being carried out or greatly delayed.”⁴⁵ **Connecticut State Board of Education, November 4th, 2015**

The state's Alliance Districts did not spend \$9.2 million given to them by the state for 2014-2015 and some school districts are diverting education funding to other inappropriate purposes.⁴⁶ Because of the magnitude of unspent education monies, the Connecticut State Department of Education is recommending that towns be allowed to carryover at most 3 percent of their Alliance funding from the prior year. East Haven, New Haven, and Norwalk had **carryovers of more than 20 percent** of their Alliance District funds.⁴⁷

In 2015 in Connecticut, while some of the poorest school districts left education monies unspent, the state had the highest achievement gap nationwide between white and Hispanic students in 8th grade math and the 4th highest gap in 8th grade reading.⁴⁸

Legislative recommendations:

- Ensure that K-12 education funds are spent effectively on programs that provide tangible improvements in education outcomes for children in the lowest performing school districts.
- Fully fund and expedite the reporting of municipal school finance data via the Uniform Chart of Accounts. Include information on how *all* funds budgeted for English Language Learners are spent.
- Education spending should provide direct benefits (such as decreasing the student-teacher ratio, among others) to teachers and their students in the classroom.

Furthermore, LPRAC will support policy goals to stop inappropriate and ineffective use of K-12 education monies.

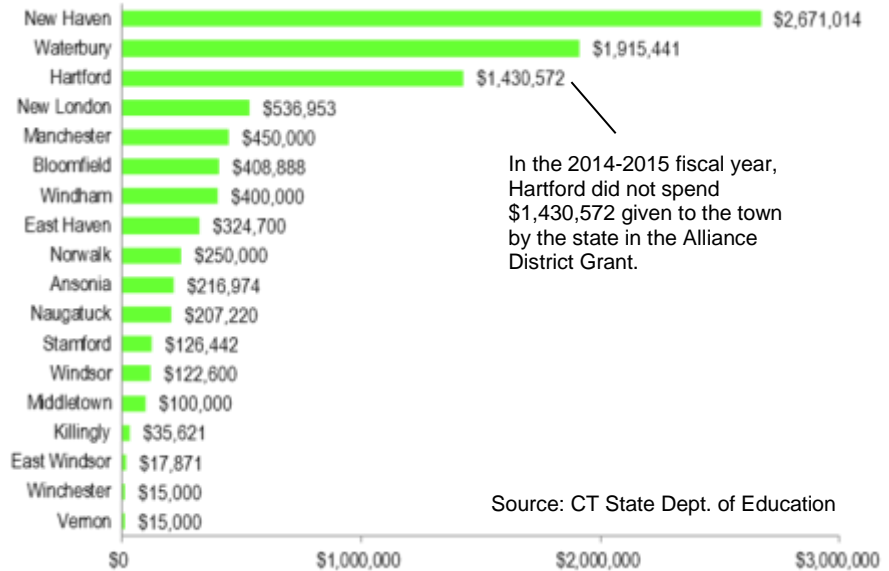
State and Local Monies Budgeted for Education Must be Spent on Education

The issue:

In 2013, over \$5 billion in local taxes were approved by voters in towns across Connecticut and then collected specifically for education; however, there is no guarantee that these local monies were spent on education as was expected by voters.⁴⁹ According to Connecticut statute ([C.G.S. § 10-262i](#)), local taxes (such as the property tax) have to be budgeted/appropriated for education but do not have to be actually spent on education.⁵⁰ Towns are able to redirect these funds to other purposes even though voters were told their taxes would be spent on local K-12 education.⁵¹ Furthermore, state funds are not allowed to supplant (i.e. replace) local education monies.⁵²

Unspent K-12 Education Funds

Alliance Districts 2014-2015



In addition to the \$5 billion in local taxes, Connecticut state government has budgeted more than \$2.0 billion annually to towns for K-12 education in fiscal years 2016 and 2017 via the Education Cost Sharing Grant (ECS).⁵³ However, some towns may be diverting education funding to unapproved and inappropriate purposes.⁵⁴

It is imperative that Connecticut rectify the jumble of education finance laws and policies that either: (1) are contradictory, (2) foster inequity in education spending, or (3) unnecessarily inflate local property taxes.⁵⁵

Legislative recommendations:

- Replace the Minimum Budget Requirement (MBR, [C.G.S. § 10-262i](#)) with the Minimum Expenditure Requirement (MER, [C.G.S. § 10-262j](#)) to require all local monies collected for education to be spent on education as was required prior to 2007.
- Municipal tax collectors must include a statement on property tax bills comparing the Board of Education budget from the previous fiscal year to the amount expended in that fiscal year. The disposition of unexpended funds must be detailed.
- Remediate the supplanting of local education monies by state education monies, as is prohibited by state law.

Furthermore, LPRAC will support policy goals to create true equity in how Connecticut and its 169 towns fund K-12 education.

“...it is difficult to tell the extent to which towns simply over-budget for education and then allow unspent money to revert back at the year’s end, effectively using ECS money to offset the cost of municipal services rather than to provide for education,”

Kenny Feder, *The Impact of the Governor’s Proposed Municipal Aid Budget on Education, Towns, and Children*, CT Voices

Create K12 Dual-Language English-Spanish Magnet in Hartford

The issue:

For English Language Learners (ELLs), Connecticut has had the worst education outcomes in 8th grade math among the fifty states for several years.⁵⁶ At the same time, the population of ELLs in Connecticut has grown to nearly 35,000 (Spanish is most common foreign language.) and accounted for nearly 7 percent of the K-12 population in the 2014-2015 school year.⁵⁷

In an English-Spanish dual-language program, students are immersed in both languages in various subjects throughout the school year. This provides English-dominant students the opportunity to become fluent in Spanish as well as teaching English to Spanish-dominant students. In Connecticut by 8th grade, English Language Learners (ELLs) in a **dual-language** program are **outperforming** their peers in other ELL programs by 50 points on the overall LAS Links Scale Scores.⁵⁸

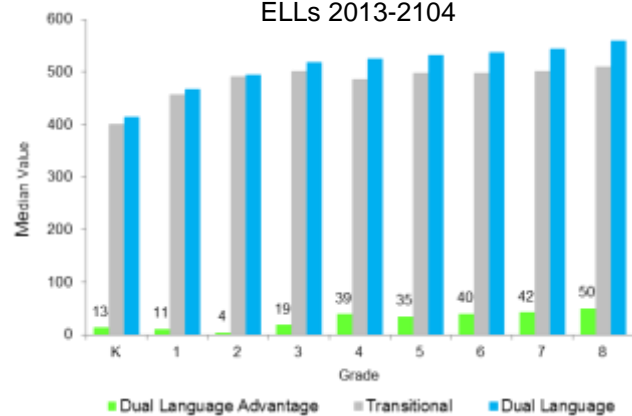
The *Compañeros* program is an English-Spanish dual-language immersion program in Windham where instruction is given in both English and Spanish for PK-8.⁵⁹ This program starts in kindergarten with an equal number of English-dominant and Spanish-dominant students. Similar programs are offered at the John C. Daniels School in New Haven, the Dual Language & Arts Magnet Middle School in Waterford, and the *Mano-A-Mano* program in Norwalk, among others.

The Hartford School District does not have a dual-language program even though it has both the largest number of Hispanic students in Connecticut and the largest population of Spanish-dominant ELLs.^{60,61} A potential location for an English-Spanish dual-language program in Hartford would be in an existing school facility in southwestern Hartford where there already exists a significant population of Spanish-dominant ELLs.

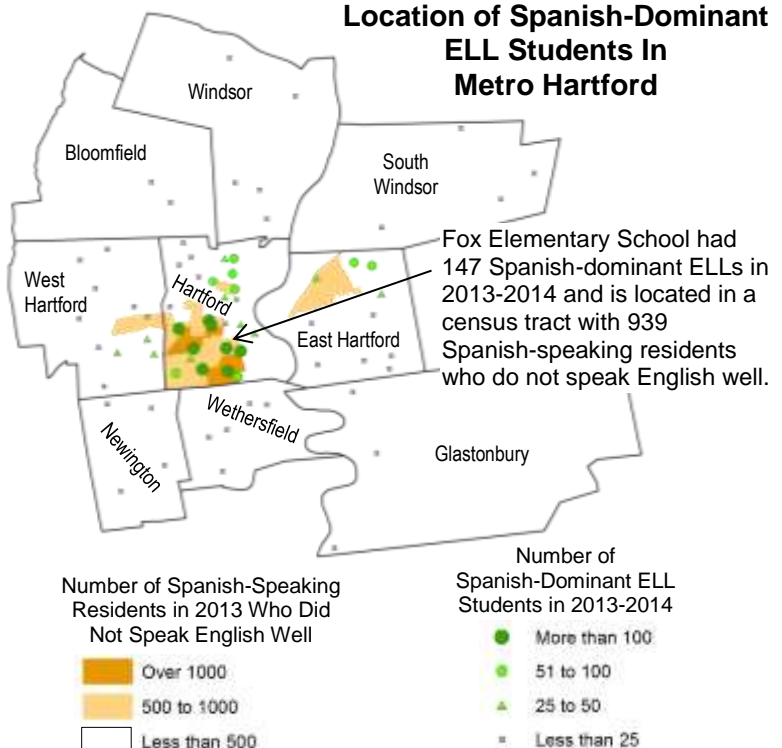
Legislative recommendations:

- Create a regional magnet school in the southwestern corner of Hartford with a focus on English-Spanish dual-language instruction.

Overall LAS Links Scale Scores
ELLs 2013-2104



Location of Spanish-Dominant ELL Students In Metro Hartford



Sources: CT State Dept. of Education, CT Dept. of Children and Families, ACS 2009-2013 table R16001

Furthermore, LPRAC will support other policy goals to improve K-12 education outcomes for English Language Learners.

More Minority Teachers: *Para* Educator Certification for High School Students

The issue:

Connecticut's K-12 population is becoming more racially diverse, but there is a severe shortage of minority teachers who reflect the demographics of the changing student population.⁶² Furthermore, Connecticut has the 3rd highest unemployment rate for Hispanics among the fifty states.⁶³ A high school program that allows minority students to become para educators (as the first step to becoming a fully accredited teacher) will help to both meet the state's demand for minority teachers and reduce the high rate of unemployment among Hispanics.



Source: ConnCan, Minority Teacher Recruitment, 2012-2013 data, at <http://www.conncan.org/recruitment>

This program could target high schools in Alliance Districts through the existing *Pathways to Teaching* program administered by the Regional Education Service Centers (RESCs).⁶⁴ Currently, the *Pathways to Teaching* program is active in 15 high schools with approximately 150 students. Funding would be needed to train high school students to prepare for the *Para Pro* exam (needed for certification) and for the RESCs to organize summer internships for students in the program.⁶⁵ The *Teacher Preparation Studies* program at Bulkeley Upper School, in

Hartford, might also be a high school that could provide para educator certification for interested students.

This program can be paid for **with current state funding** to Alliance Districts, which did not spend \$9.2 million given to them by the state in 2014-2015.⁶⁶ For example, East Haven, New Haven, and Norwalk had carryovers of more than 20 percent of their Alliance District funds in 2014-2015.⁶⁷ Because of the magnitude of unspent education funding in some towns, the Connecticut State Department of Education is recommending that towns be limited to a 3 percent carryover of their education budget every year.⁶⁸

Certainly, it would be better to invest these unspent funds to enable high school students to obtain jobs as para educators directly after high school instead of allowing school districts to divert these monies to unapproved and inappropriate purposes as occurred in the 2014-2015 fiscal year.

Legislative recommendations:

- Implement para educator training in high schools with a significant minority population.
- Provide summer internships for program participants.
- Provide financial incentive for school districts to hire high school graduates who complete the program.

Furthermore, LPRAC will support other policy goals to increase the number of Latino teachers in K-12 classrooms throughout Connecticut.

Increase Availability of Low- and Moderate-Income Housing in High Performing School Districts

The issue:

Closing the achievement gap between Hispanics and whites in Connecticut requires a comprehensive approach that improves the lives of Latino children 24/7.⁶⁹ The current emphasis on the Common Core should not distract from issues of equal importance such as increasing the availability of **affordable housing in high performing school districts** and creating stable home lives in safe communities for low-income children.

Among the states, Connecticut ranks **5th highest** in housing segregation between whites and Hispanics.⁷⁰ In fact, Latinos in Connecticut live in communities that are more segregated than in Texas. Furthermore, the Bridgeport metropolitan area is the 6th most segregated in the country for Hispanics and the Hartford metropolitan area ranks 7th.⁷¹ Based on criteria from the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development, 30 percent of Hispanics and 10 percent of all children in Connecticut live in a Racially Concentrated Area of Poverty (RCAP).⁷²

In 2013, the Connecticut Fair Housing Center reported:

“State housing regulations are not in compliance with current fair housing laws.”⁷³

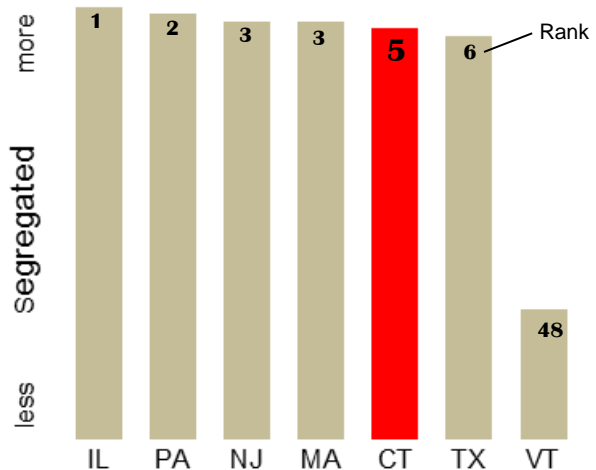
Eliminating the achievement gap between Hispanics and whites in Connecticut requires that Hispanic children live in communities: (1) that are safe, (2) are both racially and income diverse, and (3) where children are optimistic about their future.

Legislative recommendations:

- More housing for low- and moderate-income families with children is needed in high performing school districts.
- No additional multi-unit housing (targeted at families with children) should be built in census tracts where the minority population is greater than the statewide percentage (31 percent) and/or where the poverty rate is above the statewide rate (10.7 percent).⁷⁴

Furthermore, LPRAC will support other policy goals to improve education outcomes for Latino children.

Hispanic Residential Segregation



The educational achievement of a child is equally dependent on both the quality of their life outside the classroom as well as the quality of instruction inside the classroom.

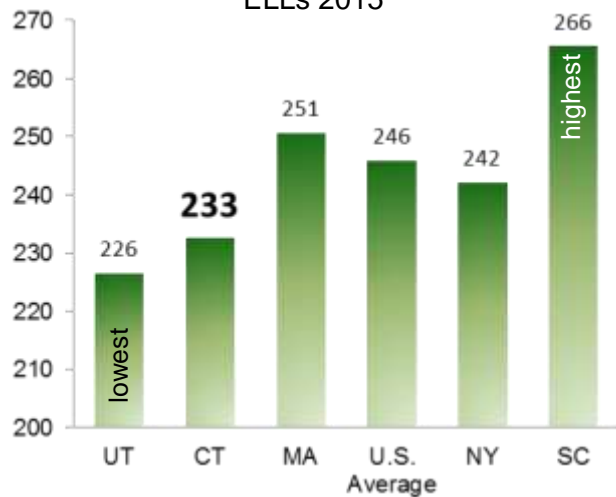
Improve Education Outcomes for English Language Learners

The issue:

While overall K-12 enrollment in Connecticut's public schools is declining, the student population of English Language Learners (ELLs) increased by more than 60 percent from 21,305 (3.7 percent of total enrollment) in academic year 2001-2002 to 34,833 (6.6 percent of total enrollment) in 2014-2015.^{75,76}

Unfortunately, the state's public education system has not dealt adequately with the growing number of non-English speaking students. When comparing 8th grade math scores between ELL and non-ELL students in 2015, Connecticut had among the **worst** outcomes in the country.^{77,78} For 8th grade math, Connecticut had both the 2nd lowest achievement score (233) for ELLs and the 2nd highest gap (53) between ELL and non-ELL students. It is not surprising then that the 2014 four-year cohort graduation rate for ELLs was 63 percent versus 87.9 percent for non-ELL students.⁷⁹

Average Scale Score for 8th Grade Math ELLs 2015



In 2012, state government in Connecticut spent \$7,150 per pupil (12th highest) on K-12 education⁸⁰ but was among the lowest in state spending per ELL student at \$64⁸¹. In comparison in Arkansas, which has the 2nd best ELL outcomes in the country, the state spent \$299 per ELL student. Furthermore, in 2012-2013 Connecticut spent more per pupil on mastery tests (\$64) than on teaching English to ELLs (\$61).⁸²

Currently, Connecticut law requires school districts to have a minimum of 20 ELL-eligible students before bilingual instruction must be provided to those students and before a district can receive state funding for bilingual instruction.⁸³ Furthermore, there is a one-year delay before school districts receive state funding after they have met the 20-student threshold.

Legislative recommendations:

- Significantly increase state funding for bilingual education.
- Eliminate the 20-student minimum for school districts to qualify for state bilingual education funding.
- Eliminate the 1-year delay in bilingual education funding to school districts.
- Require the Uniform Chart of Accounts to report bilingual education revenues and expenditures for all sources for each school.
- Focus on bilingual education programs with proven efficacy such as dual-language immersion.
- Correct the over-identification of ELLs as needing special education services.

Furthermore, LPRAC will support other policy goals to improve education outcomes for English Language Learners in Connecticut.

Promote STEM Courses Among Latino Students in Middle School and High School

The issue:

The future workforce will need “critical thinking” and “problem solving” skills that are taught in courses focusing on STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math).⁸⁴ In particular, Connecticut’s manufacturers are highly dependent on a workforce with a strong STEM skill set.

“...the state [Connecticut] is a leader in industries such as **aerospace, hydrogen fuel cells, signal processing, advanced propulsion, medical devices, and biotechnology.**

Manufacturing accounts for over \$24 billion of the state’s gross [domestic] product with almost 4,400 manufacturers employing over 150,000 workers, manufacturing companies pay nearly \$10 billion in wages per year. Workers in the state’s manufacturing sector receive an average of almost \$64,000 in annual total compensation.”⁸⁵

Communities & Banking, Winter 2014



In 2015, Connecticut had the highest achievement gap nationwide between white and Hispanic students in 8th grade math.⁸⁶ Consequently, many Hispanic students graduating from the state’s high schools are not prepared to take advantage of the STEM jobs that will become available as the state’s Baby Boomers enter retirement. While Hispanics have disproportionately high rates of unemployment, nationwide Hispanics with a degree in science or engineering have an unemployment rate below 5 percent.⁸⁷ Connecticut is going to depend increasingly on Hispanics to fill the state’s workforce needs but Hispanics are significantly underrepresented in STEM careers.

Legislative recommendations:

- Provide financial incentives (e.g. student loan forgiveness) to increase the number of math and science teachers working in Alliance Districts.
- Provide professional development training to middle school and high school counselors on the need for STEM skills in the workforce, and the underrepresentation of Latinos in STEM careers.
- Offer a comprehensive curriculum of STEM courses in middle schools and high schools that serve Latino communities.

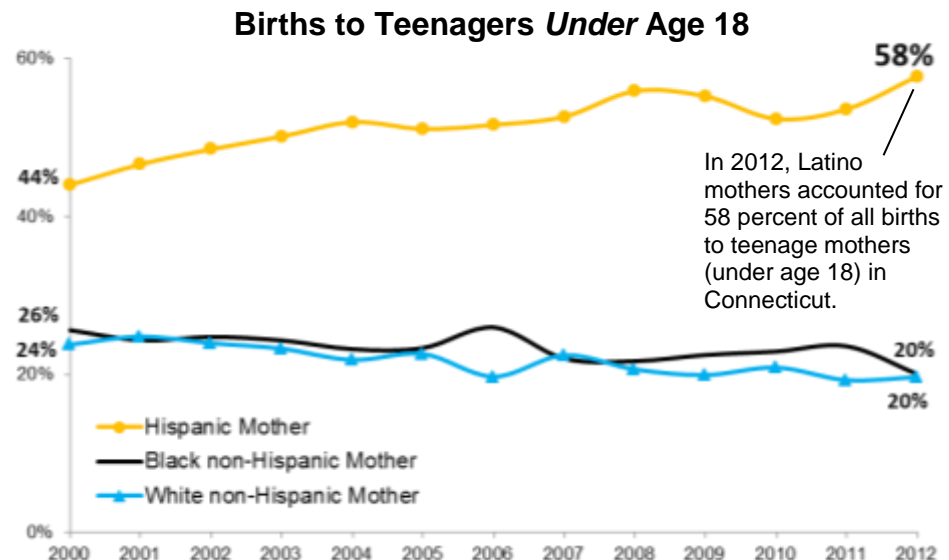
Furthermore, LPRAC will support other policy goals that increase the opportunities for Latinos to be prepared for careers in STEM.

Economic Self-Sufficiency

Reduce Pregnancies to Latino Teenagers Age 17 or Younger

The issue:

While teenage births have declined steadily among all racial/ethnic groups in Connecticut, the decline has not been as significant among Latino females. In Connecticut in 2012, Latino females were 24 percent of the population of females under age 18.⁸⁸ However, Latino females accounted for **58 percent** of all births to teenage mothers (under age 18).⁸⁹ From 2011 to 2012, the number of births to Latino females increased from 300 to 317.⁹⁰



In 2010, teen pregnancy and childbirth cost U.S. taxpayers at least **\$9.4 billion** and was a significant contributor to higher high school dropout rates among teen mothers.⁹¹

There are various causes for the higher rate of teenage births among Latino females (relative to whites and African Americans). Racial and economic isolation create barriers to positive youth outcomes and reinforce perceptions that there are few life choices available to teenage Latinas living in poverty. There is also the cultural outlook of families coming to the U.S. from Latin America who are not aware of the loss of economic opportunities for teenage mothers in the U.S. High poverty among Latinos also contributes to less access to contraception and an increase in the likelihood of an unstable home life.

Legislative recommendations:

- Require developmentally appropriate school-based sexual health education starting in middle school in school districts (and charter schools) serving towns with the five highest number of teen births. In 2012, the five towns were Hartford, Waterbury, New Haven, New Britain, and Bridgeport.⁹²
- Increase access to contraception for low-income teens and provide consistent year-to-year funding for evidence-based teen pregnancy prevention programs with proven efficacy.
- Increase the availability of licensed maternity group homes with comprehensive resources for homeless teen mothers to graduate from high school and become economically self-sufficient.
- Provide teen mothers resources to graduate from high school including transportation to/from school and childcare, as well as other services to make them economically self-sufficient and reduce the incidence of second births to teenage mothers.
- Create more youth employment programs to increase the feeling of self-worth among teenage Hispanic girls and that lead to economic self-sufficiency.

Furthermore, LPRAC will support other policy goals to discourage teenage pregnancies among Latino youth.

Replace For-Profit Bail Bonds with Lower Cost Pre-Trial Release

The issue:

The current “for profit” criminal bail bond system has been found to discriminate against persons who are low-income and cannot afford bail to be released.⁹³ For low-income families that are already struggling, having a family member in jail while awaiting trial can result in harmful socioeconomic consequences.

“Poor defendants are cut off from families. They may lose their jobs. They may go without access to medication for a period of time.”⁹⁴ **New Jersey Supreme Court Chief Justice Stuart Rabner**

In 2015, the state’s *Prison and Jail Overcrowding Working Group* reported, “Although many defendant’s [sic] are released on a non-financial bond subsequent to a Bail interview in a local or state police lock-up facility, or at arraignment, many defendants are held on a financial bond which the defendant cannot post.”⁹⁵ An alternative is to replace the for profit bail bond system with a pre-trial release system that releases **low-risk** individuals from jail while they await trial and keeps high-risk individuals in jail.^{96,97}



www.bailbondsandleraz.com

Several states are working with alternative methods for pre-trial release programs, which have shown to benefit taxpayers by reducing both the number of people who are in jail awaiting trial and the corresponding taxpayer cost to keep them in jail.⁹⁸

“... studies have shown the costs of supervised pretrial release averages is less than \$10 per day, a fraction of the cost of housing, feeding and medical care required for defendants in local jails.”⁹⁹

Timothy Murray of the Pretrial Justice Institute

Finding an alternative to for profit bail bonds may have a tangibly positive impact on Latinos in Connecticut who are disproportionately low-income and comprise a disproportionately high percentage of the prison population.

“Standing with social activists, clergy and the mayors of Trenton and Camden — two of New Jersey’s poorest and most violent cities — Gov. Chris Christie today urged the state Legislature to act to reform the state’s ‘broken’ bail system before time runs out next week.”¹⁰⁰ www.nj.com

Legislative recommendation:

- Support legislation to replace the for profit bail bond system with an alternative such as a pre-trial release system.

Furthermore, LPRAC will support other criminal justice reforms that benefit Latinos.

Obtain State Funding to Finish Building the Willimantic Whitewater Park

The issue:

In 2014, 35 percent of the population of Windham (Willimantic) was Hispanic, which was the 4th highest concentration of Hispanics in Connecticut's towns.¹⁰¹ Furthermore in 2014, Willimantic had one of the highest unemployment rates among Connecticut towns at 8.4 percent compared to the statewide unemployment rate of 6.6 percent.¹⁰²

The Willimantic Whitewater Partnership currently hosts an annual whitewater (kayaking) festival and has purchased land in downtown Willimantic to build, "... a multi-use recreation and transcultural arts hub at the intersection of four greenways: the **East Coast Greenway**, the **Airline Trail**, the **Hop River Trail**, and the **Willimantic River Greenway**."¹⁰³



Conceptual design for the Willimantic Whitewater Park at <http://www.willimanticwhitewater.org/>.

"Connecticut's economy is reinforced by a strong tourism sector, which not only directly supports a large number of workers, but also has a significant indirect impact on job creation and business development."¹⁰⁴ **Connecticut Governor Dannel Malloy**

This Willimantic Whitewater Park will add to already increasing tourism in eastern Connecticut; furthermore, similar whitewater projects have been an economic boom to local economies in other parts of the country.¹⁰⁵

Building the Willimantic Whitewater Park will provide well-paying construction jobs for unemployed Latinos living in Willimantic and will continue to provide jobs after the park opens. The Willimantic Whitewater Partnership has purchased land for the site but lacks funding to finish construction.

Legislative recommendations:

- Support legislation to fund fully the construction of the Willimantic Whitewater Park.

Furthermore, LPRAC will support other policy goals that will create jobs for Latinos in the Willimantic area.

Increase State Funding for Transportation Infrastructure

The issue:

Transportation infrastructure spending provides well-paid jobs for low-skilled workers. Every \$1 billion spent on highway infrastructure **creates** roughly **13,000 jobs**, both directly and indirectly.¹⁰⁶ Usually, mostly Democrats supported infrastructure spending; however, Republican economist Glenn Hubbard also supports infrastructure spending and suggests that it would benefit low-income households.¹⁰⁷

“...infrastructure projects should provide substantial benefits to lower-income Americans.” **Glenn Hubbard, Former Chairman of the Council of Economic Advisers for President George W. Bush**

Furthermore, Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago President Charles Evans suggests that the best time to invest in infrastructure spending is when costs are low and unemployment is high.¹⁰⁸

“A period of low interest rates and widely available unemployed and underemployed labor is an advantageous time to build or improve infrastructure because the costs to do so are lower.” **Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago President Charles Evans**



In 2014 in Connecticut,¹⁰⁹

- The overall unemployment rate was 9th highest among the fifty states at 7.9 percent.
- Hispanics had the 3rd highest unemployment rate among the fifty states at 11.8 percent.
- 29 percent of Hispanics did not have a high school diploma.

A study by the Connecticut General Assembly found that, “*Economic growth can be linked to targeted investments in transportation infrastructure.*”¹¹⁰ Proposed construction of an I-84 Viaduct in Hartford would result in economic benefits that are more than double the cost of construction, as Governor Malloy states, “...making a down payment on a project that we must replace will generate billions in economic activity and grow thousands of jobs.”¹¹¹ Connecticut’s low-income Hispanic population would benefit greatly from well-paid construction jobs created by state and federal spending on infrastructure projects.

Legislative recommendations:

- Create a financial incentive for employers to provide transportation to/from worksites for employees who do not have access to transportation or expand existing regional transportation services to specific construction worksites.
- Increase state funding for infrastructure projects (roads, bridges, rail, etc...) in urban areas.
- Require that the majority of state-funded infrastructure jobs go to workers who have been a Connecticut resident for at least the prior twelve consecutive months.

Furthermore, LPRAC will support other policy goals that maintain or increase funding for infrastructure projects that create jobs for the state’s Latino population.

Ban the Box: Fair Chance Hiring

The issue:

Based on a survey conducted in fourteen states, **67 percent** of ex-offenders are unemployed or underemployed five years after being released from prison compared to Connecticut's statewide unemployment rate of 7.9 percent.^{112, 113} (The unemployment rate for ex-offenders in Connecticut is not available).

Hispanics number nearly 25 percent of the incarcerated population in Connecticut but account for only 13 percent of the state's adult population.^{114, 115} Put another way, Hispanics are nearly twice as likely to be incarcerated in Connecticut. Furthermore, Connecticut has the 3rd highest unemployment rate in the U.S. for Hispanics at 11.8 percent.¹¹⁶ This is due in-part to the disproportionate number of Hispanics being sent to prison and the difficulty ex-offenders have in finding work after they complete their sentence.¹¹⁷ In fact, employers are more likely to give a job interview to a White applicant with a prison record than to a Hispanic who has never been to prison.¹¹⁸ For Hispanics ex-offenders, getting that first in-the-door job interview is even more elusive.

Ban-the-Box policy prohibits employers from asking about a job applicant's criminal record *before* granting them an interview, which creates a more level playing field for ex-offenders to get an initial interview.¹¹⁹ Ban-the-Box merely moves the criminal background check to later in the hiring process. In 2010, Connecticut adopted Ban-the-Box for state employees ([C.G.S. § 46a-80](#)).

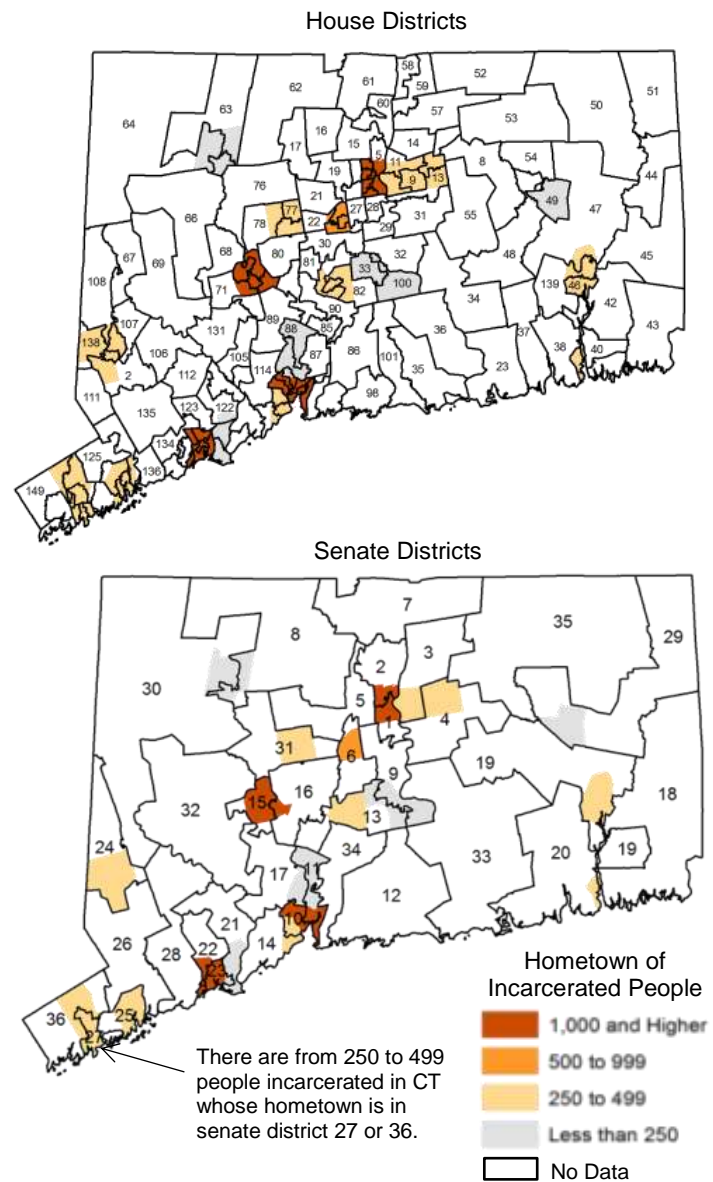
As of September 2015, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, New Jersey, and four other states prohibit both public- and private-sector employers from asking about an applicant's criminal record *before* granting an interview.¹²⁰

Legislative recommendation:

- Expand Ban-the-Box policy to all employers in the public- and private-sector in Connecticut.

Furthermore, LPRAC will support other policy goals that improve employment prospects for ex-offenders.

Legislative Districts and Prisoner Hometowns



More Paid Internships and Summer Jobs for Low-Income Youth

The issue:

Connecticut has very high unemployment rates for its young workers looking for their first job.¹²¹ In many of the state's towns, unemployment for those ages 16-19 is over 25 percent, which was more than double the statewide unemployment rate of 9.6 percent in 2014.¹²²

Historically, young workers from low-income households obtained their first job through federal summer jobs programs; however, funding for these programs was reduced.¹²³

Each year a young adult does not get their first job, they become harder to employ and it increases their chances of becoming dependent upon social services for much of their life. It has been estimated that each *opportunity youth* (i.e. idle or disconnected; not working and not in school) results in,

“... an immediate taxpayer burden of \$13,900 per year and an **immediate social burden of \$37,450 per year.**”¹²⁴

After age 25, each opportunity youth will,

“... impose a future lifetime taxpayer burden of \$170,740 and a social burden of \$529,030.”¹²⁵

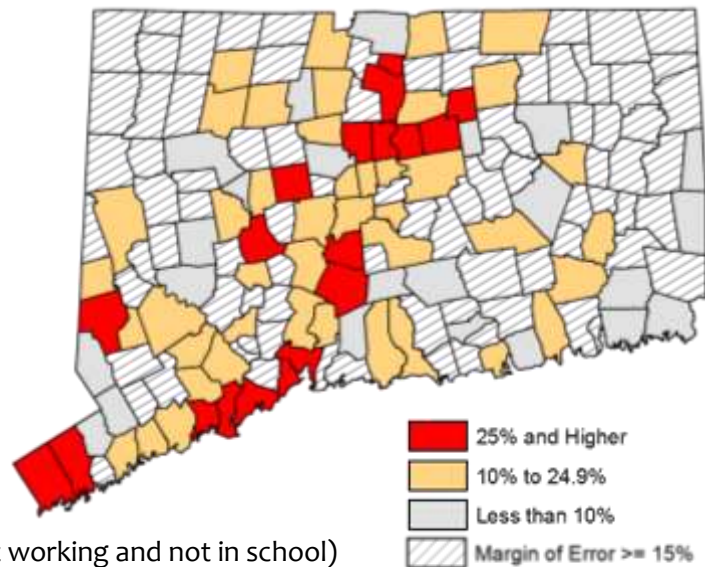
In addition to increasing workforce readiness, some summer job programs for low-income youth have resulted in (1) increased school attendance, (2) decreases in violent crime arrests, and (3) decreases in drug and alcohol use.¹²⁶

Legislative recommendations:

- Increase the number of federal- and state-funded summer jobs for low-income youth in urban and rural areas with the highest youth unemployment rates.
- Increase the number of low-income youth participating in paid internships during the school year.
- Implement a lottery system for summer jobs programs to ensure there is no nepotism in who gets a job.

Furthermore, LPRAC will support other policy goals that increase the opportunities for Latino youth to obtain paid work experience.

Unemployment in 2014
Ages 16-19



*You cannot be hired
for a second job until
you have had a first
job.*

Increase Economic Growth by Increasing Racial Diversity in the Workplace

The issue:

In 2014, Hispanics numbered 15 percent of the working-age population (age 18-64) in Connecticut, but only 6 percent of employees working for the General Assembly and only 10 percent of employees in the executive branch.^{127,128} Furthermore, statewide unemployment among Hispanics was 11.8 percent compared to 6.2 for non-Hispanic whites, in 2014.¹²⁹

The demographics of the state's workforce is changing as the Baby Boom generation, which is predominately white and older, enters into retirement and are replaced by a workforce that is increasingly Latino.¹³⁰ In fact, the state's working-age population is forecast to be over 20 percent Latino by 2030.

Hispanic buying power will have increased from 3 percent of the state's buying power, in 1990, to 8 percent, by 2018, while the buying power of whites declines due to a declining population and aging. Between 2013 and 2018, Latino buying power in Connecticut is forecast to increase 15 percent, compared to a 2 percent decline for the white population.¹³¹

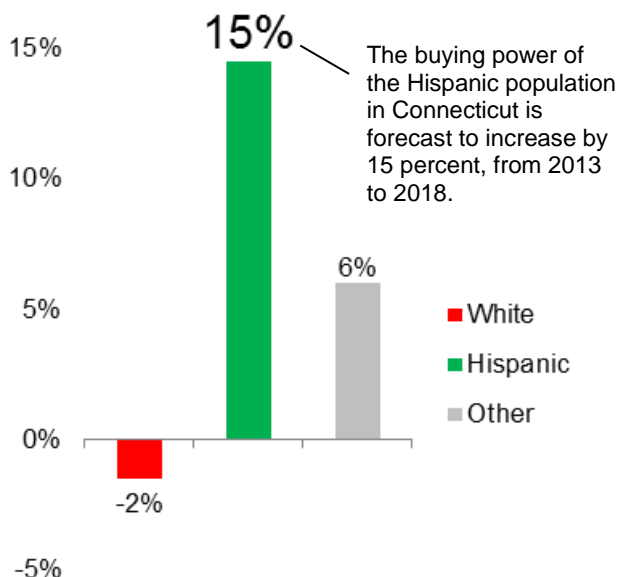
Simply put, the future of the state's economy is inextricably linked to the future economic success of Connecticut's Latino workers.

Legislative recommendations:

- All positions in the executive branch that are open only to current state employees must be open to the public and not restricted to only the current pool of state employees, which does not reflect the racial and ethnic diversity of the state's workforce.
- Practices that deter the employment of unemployed workers or discriminate against legal resident workers must be stopped.

Furthermore, LPRAC will support other policy goals that increase opportunities for Latinos to enter the workforce.

**Change in Buying Power in CT
2013 to 2018**



Free From Discrimination

Create Task Force to Study *Non-Partisan* Alternatives for Legislative Redistricting

The issue:

Every ten years there is a national census and states use this data to redraw their legislative boundaries. The process is called “redistricting.” The next decennial census will be in 2020. The effect of redistricting on political representation cannot be understated.

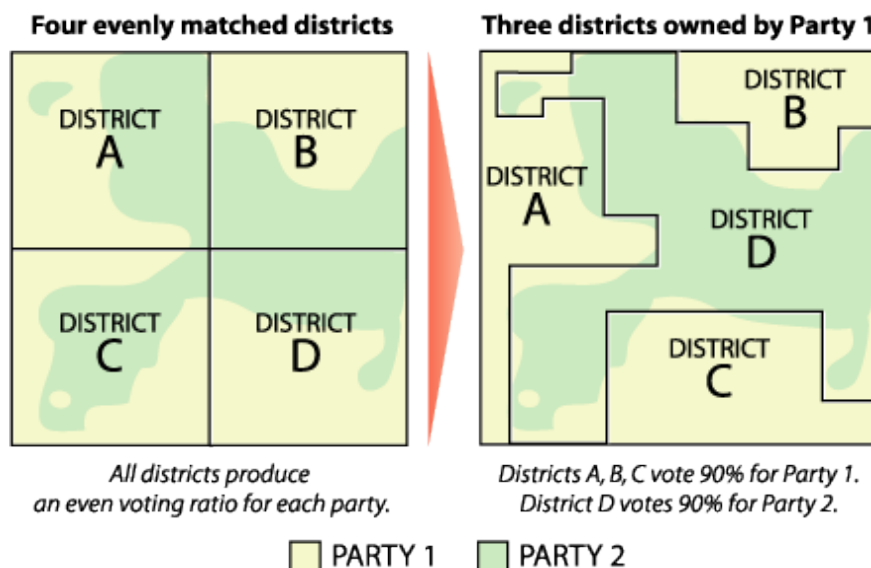
“Drawing lines for congressional districts is one of the most significant acts a state can perform to ensure citizen participation in Republican self-governance.” **U.S. Supreme Court Justice Anthony Kennedy, *LULAC v. Perry*, 2006**

Historically, redistricting has been a politically partisan process that favors the political party with the most elected state legislators. Democrats want political boundaries that will help to elect Democrats. Republicans want political boundaries that will help to elect Republicans. Redistricting has also been used to minimize the voting power of minorities.

“The cost of gerrymandering [partisan redistricting] is unfortunately the polarization of representative bodies and the increased distance of elected representative from the median preferences of the voting public.”¹³² **Law professor Samuel Issacharoff**

In Connecticut, a redistricting plan is drafted by a committee composed of both Democrat and Republican. The plan must then be approved by two-thirds of legislators in both the state Senate and House of Representatives.¹³³ In 2012, the state legislature was not able to agree on a redistricting plan and ultimately the Connecticut Supreme Court adopted a plan proposed by a court-appointed special master.

States are starting to change the way they do redistricting and some states now use a non-partisan citizen board that excludes government officials from the redistricting process.¹³⁴



By Jeremy Kemp at en.wikipedia [Public domain], via Wikimedia Commons

Legislative recommendations:

- Support legislation to create an exploratory task force to study alternative ways for redistricting state and federal legislative boundaries in Connecticut. The findings from this task force must be implemented in time for the next round of redistricting after the 2020 decennial census.

Furthermore, LPRAC will support other policy goals that will ensure Latinos are equitably represented by Connecticut’s state and federal legislative districts based on redistricting laws.¹³⁵

End Prison Gerrymandering

The issue:

If a town wants to increase its representation in the state legislature without increasing its number of voters, the best way is to have a prison in the town.

In Connecticut, prisoners are counted as part of a prison town's population for political representation purposes, but prisoners cannot vote. This situation is contrary to the principle of equal representation.¹³⁶

In Somers, **20 percent** of the town's population is in two local prisons and most of these incarcerated people lived in another town before going to prison in Somers.¹³⁷ There are only 685 Hispanics in Somers and nearly 80 percent are in the prison population. In practice, Somers' Hispanic prison population is increasing Somers' political representation. Who benefits; not Hispanics because they number only 2 percent of the non-prison population of Somers.

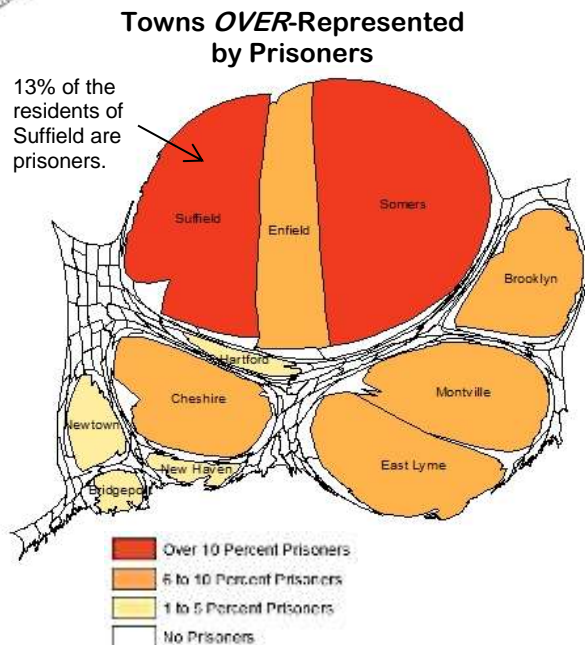
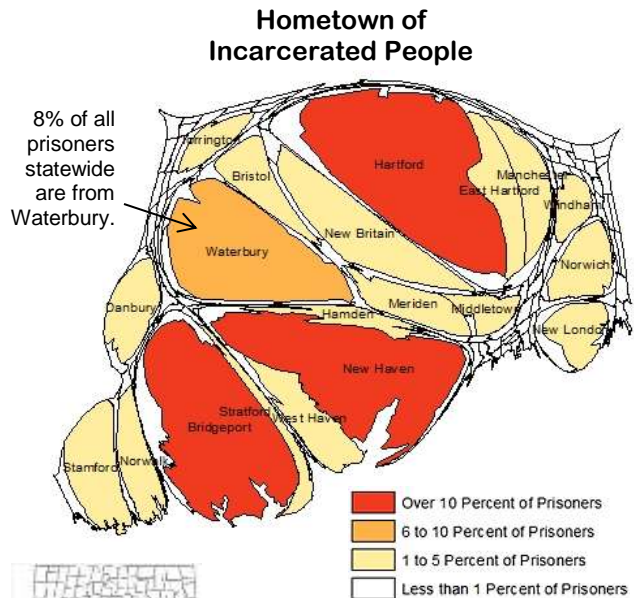
Counting inmates in a local town's population increases the political representation of voters in the prison town, and reduces the political representation of everyone else in Connecticut. New York, Maryland, California, and Delaware have ended prison gerrymandering by counting prisoners in the town where they lived before they went to prison.¹³⁸

Legislative recommendation:

- For purposes of state and federal representation, support legislation to count inmates in the town where they lived before they went to prison.

Furthermore, LPRAC will support other policy goals that ensure Latinos in Connecticut have equitable legislative representation.

"Nationally, 97% of the offenders ... return to the communities from which they came." U.S. Department of Justice



Sources: CT DoC, CT DoH, ACS

Reduce Housing Segregation of Latinos

The issue:

Based on criteria from the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development, 30 percent of Hispanics and 10 percent of all children in Connecticut live in a Racially Concentrated Area of Poverty (RCAP).¹³⁹ Connecticut is among the **top 5** most residentially segregated states for Latinos nationwide.¹⁴⁰ Bridgeport ranks 6th and Hartford ranks 7th for most residentially segregated metropolitan areas for Latinos in the U.S.¹⁴¹

“Intended or not, zoning probably limits mobility, especially for poorer households. And this, in turn, may confine low-income households to towns where socioeconomic conditions impair the quality of education, further restricting their long-term mobility.”¹⁴² **The Connecticut Economy**

“The decision’s [U.S. Supreme Court *TDHCA v. ICP*] recognition of ‘unconscious’ or implicit bias will enable advocates to ‘prevent segregated housing patterns that might otherwise result from covert and illicit stereotyping.’”¹⁴³ **Poverty & Race Research Action Council**

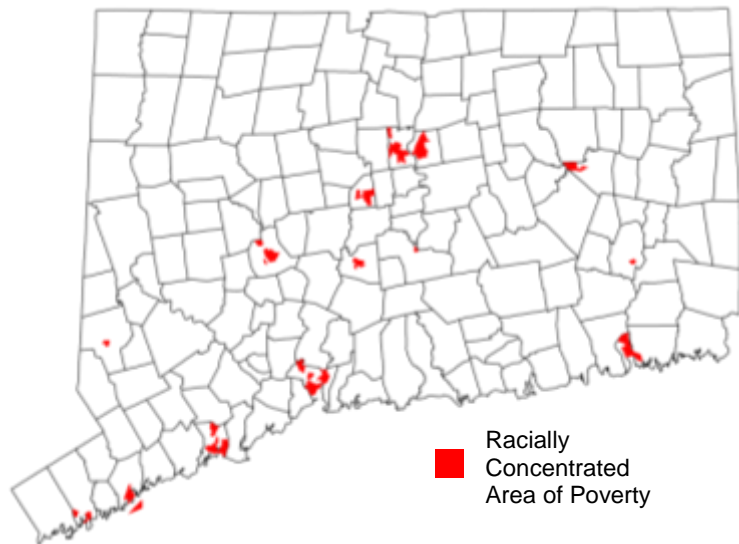
In 2010, Hartford was one of the most **hyper segregated** cities in the U.S., which “... produces high levels of social isolation from mainstream society, but also high concentrations of poverty and disadvantage ...”¹⁴⁴ One of the major contributing factors to this social isolation is that the Hartford-West Hartford-East Hartford metropolitan area ranks 1st in having the most restrictive zoning among the country’s one-hundred largest metropolitan areas.¹⁴⁵

Legislative recommendations:

- Eliminate requirement that pre-existing town residency is needed to be eligible for affordable housing.
- Oppose conversion of “affordable” housing to “elderly only” housing that does not include means testing.
- Obtain state funding to inform Latino communities of: (1) fair housing laws and (2) the requirement that municipalities must review local impediments to fair housing on a regular basis.
- Eliminate exclusionary zoning laws that result in residential segregation.
- Create a centralized statewide database of local zoning maps and ordinances.
- Stop adding subsidized housing in Racially Concentrated Areas of Poverty.
- Support legislation to fund adequately the Connecticut Dept. of Housing so it can enforce full compliance with the federal Fair Housing Act.

Furthermore, LPRAC will support other policy goals that reduce housing segregation in Connecticut.

Residential Segregation in Connecticut Towns



Source: State of CT Dept. of Housing, *Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice 2015*, Fig. 2, p.128

Increase Number of Latinos on Public Sector Boards and Commissions

The issue:

In 2011, 12 percent of the state's adult population, age 18 and over, was Latino, but only 4 percent of appointees to state boards and commissions were Latino.¹⁴⁶

In Connecticut, Latinos have the lowest rate of involvement as *local* community leaders so it is not a surprise that Latinos are also the most underrepresented racial/ethnic group on state boards and commissions.^{147,148}

A determined and visible effort must be made by public and quasi-public organizations at all levels of government (state, regional, and municipal) to recruit individuals that reflect the diversity of the communities they represent. Latinos working in both the public sector and private sector should be encouraged to become more civically active.

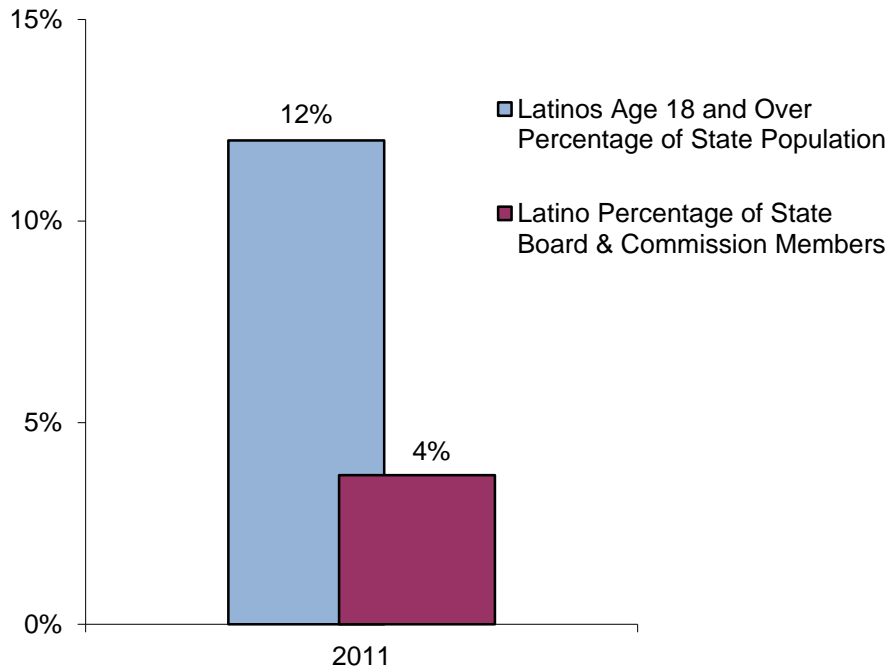
Connecticut can increase its stock of state-level Latino leaders by eliminating barriers to *local* civic involvement, which is often the initial pathway to state-level civic engagement.

Legislative recommendations:

- Towns and other municipal organizations should be required to report the age, race, and sex of elected and appointed officials annually. Data is needed to identify regional and municipal organizations that do not reflect the diversity of the community they serve so that more targeted efforts can be made to recruit individuals from diverse backgrounds to become civically involved.
- Fund LPRAC's proposed analysis An Inventory of Barriers to Local Civic Engagement for Latinos in Connecticut's Municipalities, which will (1) identify municipalities where Latinos are underrepresented on local boards and commissions, and (2) where applicable, highlight the barriers that hinder Latino civic participation at the municipal and regional levels.

Furthermore, LPRAC will support other policy goals that increase the participation of Latinos on municipal, regional, and state boards and commissions.

Latinos on State Boards & Commissions



Endnotes

- ¹ Report of the Task Force on Childhood Obesity, October 1, 2014, at: https://www.cga.ct.gov/kid/tfs/20140123_Task%20Force%20on%20Childhood%20Obesity/Obesity%20TF%20Final%20Report2.pdf
- ² Sally S. Wong, *Epidemiology of Childhood Obesity*, at: https://www.cga.ct.gov/kid/tfs/20140123_Task%20Force%20on%20Childhood%20Obesity/20131219/Childhood%20Obesity%20Presentation.pdf
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